on constant interaction with trade, industry and export promotion organisations.

**Problems of Rubber Growers in Kerala**

465. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems of the rubber growers of Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the impact of the Exim Policy on these growers; and

,(d) what steps are proposed to be taken to mitigate their hardships?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Due to the fall in consumption of Natural Rubber by the user industries, the price of natural rubber has been witnessing a dowanward trend since 1996.

(c) As per the current EXIM Policy, import •of natural rubber is in the Negative List and is allowed only against Advance Licence/Special Import Licence. However, there is no restriction on the export of natural rubber.

(d) In order to arrest the decline in rubber prices and to provide a remunerative price to the rubber planters, Government had instituted a market intervention operation through STC for procurement of 10,000 MT of Natural Rubber on Government Account. The Government has recently decided to procure an additional quantity of 20000 MT.

**Impact of Exim Policy on Fishermen**

466. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation about the impact of Exim Policy on the traditional fishermen of the country;

(b) if so the details thereof;

(c) what is the impact of the policy on the export of marine products; and

(d) how Government propose to enhance the export of these products?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government has not received any specific representation about the impact of EXIM Policy on the traditional fishermen of the country. However, the problems faced by the seafood processing industry were discussed and the suggestions made by the industry are under consideration.

(c) Precise impact of the recently announced Policy on sea food processing and export would be known only after some time but Govt, expects that the export target fixed will be met.

(d)Government has provided the following facilities under EXIM Policy for enhancing the export of marine products;

(i) Encouraging ecofriendly sustainable aqua culture through various development schemes;

(ii) Encouraging deversified fishing to step up export of commercially important underexploited species;

(iii) Encouraging better utilization of scarce raw-materials for production of value added marine products which can fetch higher unit value;

(iv) Encouraging modernisation of the existing processing plants;

(v) Allowing raw materials and packing materials duty free when used in the export of fish and sifh products.

(vi) Notifying the DEPB (Duty Entitlement Pass Book) rates applicable on the export of fish and fish products.

(vii) Reduction of the threshold value of Zero duty EPCG Scheme from Rs. 20 Crores to Rs. 1 Crore which should enable SSI and medium seafood processing units to procure essential machinry duty free at globally competitive prices.

**India's Share of Export**

467. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) India's share of export in the International market;

(b) the reasons for India's low share; and

(c) the steps proposed to boost export;

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) India's